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Promotion and protection of the rights of children

Letter dated 21 January 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the declaration entitled "A child today a leader tomorrow", adopted at the First Ladies Summit, which was held in Kuala Lumpur from 11 to 13 October 2010 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 64.

(*Signed*) Hamidon **Ali**
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Annex to the letter dated 21 January 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Declaration of the First Ladies Summit

A child today a leader tomorrow

Kuala Lumpur, 11-13 October 2010

We, the First Ladies convened at the First Ladies Summit in Kuala Lumpur from 11 to 13 October 2010, declare that:

1. Our vision for our children's future is a world in which all children have access to health care throughout their lifetimes, and quality free education where they can learn the skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary to create, innovate and thrive. It is a world with opportunities for meaningful, productive work, economic prosperity and social advancement for all to live sustainably in dignity, respect and tolerance. It is also a world with networks that help individuals develop resilience, character, morality, compassion, understanding and appreciation of diversity.

2. We live in challenging times of risk and adversity but we are optimistic that globalization, culture and technology provide extraordinary opportunities for children to make choices and create solutions. These opportunities are important to achieve social advancement, economic development, cultural renaissance and the ecological resilience of humankind.

3. We need future leaders who are responsible and far-sighted, understand the impact of their decisions and are willing to go beyond self-interest and boundaries to commit to a global partnership. These leaders have the ability to anticipate and solve current and future challenges with ethically and morally driven solutions for the welfare of their local and global communities. We agree that the future our children inherit will be the result of choices we make today.

4. As First Ladies from countries with varying capacities, we have the potential to make significant advances by:

- Undertaking initiatives in our respective countries to empower children and build their limitless potential to become resilient leaders, thus strengthening the foundation for nation-building and global peace.
- Working together as First Ladies to mobilize resources within the international community to achieve common goals among our respective countries.

We hereby resolve and commit ourselves to work with different stakeholders including families, Governments, academia, business, media, non-profit organizations and local communities to mobilize resources and achieve at least one goal in each of the following three areas:

Education

a. Invest in integrated solutions at all levels of free compulsory education from early childhood to empower, challenge and enrich children.

b. Champion equal opportunities for boys and girls across all educational initiatives.

c. Recruit the best and brightest students as teachers and incentivize them as professionals.

d. Enhance teacher-training programmes to enable teachers to differentiate instructions for students with different needs, ranging from those with special needs to those who are gifted and talented.

e. Champion widespread access to the Internet in order to capitalize on youth's proclivity for change, mobility and the use of technology. This will prepare young people with the skills, including language literacy and English proficiency, that are needed to responsibly create and use global knowledge.

f. Balance emphases on science, technology, and mathematics with humanities and multilingual literacy for all children to learn deeply and to think critically and creatively. Teach children how to make wise decisions in the use of science and technology.

g. Embrace innovative pedagogies to enhance critical and creative thinking and problem-solving skills for all children.

h. Teach children coping strategies such as help-seeking behaviours and conflict resolution skills directly and indirectly through peer mediators, teacher assistants and peacemakers.

i. Focus on integrated enrichment approaches including support to parents, to develop talent and creativity in all children.

j. Invest in programmes and services such as student councils, student government or parliament, youth forums, cultural exchanges and other leadership programmes to create young leaders with compassion, confidence and courage.

k. Partner with businesses, media and non-profit organizations to establish scholarships, connectivity and other forms of support for children to develop their talents.

Families

a. Provide guidance that enables children to discover and interact with their environment, which would enhance their socialization processes, family and spiritual values and their ability to create new knowledge.

b. Provide programmes and initiatives for healthy and nutritious diets to ensure children's optimal physical and mental development from the womb onward.

c. Teach children to be self-reliant in learning and decision-making to cope with constant change and diversity.

d. Recognize, develop and support children's talents or hobbies.

e. Strengthen family and community relationships and social support networks.

f. Establish education on reproductive health for boys and girls and encourage young people to delay childbearing until they complete secondary education.

Communities

a. Advocate legislation for children's protection and human rights and develop policies to translate legislation into programmes and services that can be widely implemented.

b. Promote programmes that provide an intellectual, cultural and spiritual milieu to encourage children to develop in faith, embrace moderation and learn to respect and value diversity in order to build a peaceful coexistence for all.

c. Champion out-of-school programmes, mentorships and service learning to provide real life experiences that develop 21st century skills.

d. Address issues of degradation and climate change to ensure a safe, secure and environmentally sustainable physical world for children to grow and flourish.